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The Passion of Edith Stein

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Today most of us like to be known as "passionate persons". Or, put the other way around, no one likes to be known as a woman or a man "without passion." Passion seems to be the salt of life, the energy and strength of dedication, the charisma which attracts others into relationship, or the motor which drives the will. It is, of course, a little bit of all of these things, but it is also something else. All of these popular ascriptions to passion seem to imply that it is a positive, almost energetic aspect of life. Yet, if we consider its root "passio" we learn that it also implies something passive, something undergone, or suffered.¹ So passion is paradoxically something both passive and active.

Some people also oppose ^{passion} to reason. We do this when we say: "my passions got the better of me" or "he was overrun with passion for something." Again, while it is true that sometimes passions are opposed to reason, it is also the case that passion may have a direct relation to reason. St. Thomas reminds us in the *Summa Theologia* "passion is a movement of the irrational soul, when we think of good or evil."² So thoughts seem to evoke passions.

Passions seem to have the potential to be brought under the direction or control of reason or to remain outside of and even sometimes inaccessible to reason. It is precisely this dual

potential that provides complex bases for the drama of human decisions in life. In this drama ~~passions seem sometimes opposed to reason and at other times in harmony with reason.~~

When we consider whether passion is active or passive, we are considering the relation between passion and the will; and when we consider whether passion is opposed to or in harmony with reason we are considering the relation between passion and the intellect. It is precisely the dynamic interaction of passions, intellect, and will that reveal to us the depth of the human personality as a man or woman struggles to make sense of life, to make good decisions, and to become ever more fully developed as a person in community with others persons.

Timeline
 In order to enflesh this rather abstract philosophical description of the human person, I will consider the place of passion in the life of Edith Stein. For those of you who do not know about her life, I will just mention here, that she was born in Breslau, Eastern Germany (now Poland) of a Jewish family, worked as a nurse during the first world war, earned her Doctorate in Philosophy under Edmund Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological movement, converted to Catholicism, was unable to secure a university position as lecturer because of her sex, taught in a Catholic girls school and gave public lectures on woman's identity, lost her job because of her Jewish identity at the rise of Hitler's nationalist socialism, entered a Carmelite monastery ^{in Cologne}, was transferred to a Carmelite monastery in Echt, Holland because of the danger to her life in Germany, was arrested in reprisal for the Dutch Bishop's refusal to cooperate with and Hitler, was shipped by train to Auschwitz, where she died in 1942.

These sketchy details give something of the complex picture of Edith Steins life, but they do not open up the interior dynamics of the interaction of her passions, intellect, and will, as

she forged her identity through these momentous historical events. Fortunately, Edith Stein was also a writer, and she has bequeathed to us many documents which contain much information through which we can come to know her, and perhaps to learn from her as well.

We will consider four different meanings of passion in the life of Edith Stein: 1) her ordinary experience of the eleven fundamental human passions identified by St. Thomas Aquinas, 2) her passion for the study of philosophy, 3) her passion for the full development of woman's identity, and 4) her compassion and participation in the Passion of Christ. Each of these four concepts of passion has a slightly different focus, and each one complements the other. Finally, we will use Edith Stein's own words to tell her story both in its autobiographical dimensions as well as its theoretical foundations in her philosophical and spiritual writings.

I: The Passions in the Ordinary Life of Edith Stein

In our introduction we introduced a Thomistic definition of passion as a movement of the irrational soul. This movement is not simply an occurrence without direction. Instead, it is a movement towards or away from what he calls "a sensible good or evil." What this means is that the passion springs up in us in response to something we perceive with our senses, something we experience as either good or evil for us, or we think about as good or evil.

Aquinas identifies eleven fundamental passions, and he divides them into two groups: the concupiscent passions and the irascible passions. These technical terms have a broader meaning than is often considered today. The concupiscent passions are a movement towards or away from sensible goods or evils which cause pleasure or pain: they are arranged in the following pairs: love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow. The irascible passions are a movement

towards or away from those sensible goods or evils which are arduous or difficult for us: they are arranged in the pairs: hope and despair, fear and daring, and the single unpaired passion of anger.

If we look more closely at these eleven passions we can see how they are experienced as both active and passive. For the movement towards or away an object ^{may be} is active, while the experience of the object as good or evil, causing us pain or pleasure, or being difficult, is something we undergo or which happens to us. So the seeming paradox of passion as active and passive is somewhat resolved.

In addition, St. Thomas understands the passions themselves to be morally neutral in that they simply move through a human being in response to the objects experienced in the world. When the person makes a decision about how to act in relation to the passions, moral life begins. It is here that the intellect and will come into play, here that the personality is formed, when the person performs a good or a bad act, and by repeated performances develops good or bad habits, virtues or vices, and a good or bad character. If the intellect is in union with what is true, and the will chooses what is good, then the passions become well ordered within the person. These are what we call "big ifs", however, and the drama of the moral life is worked out in precisely coming to terms with these parameters of human action in community.

The first step in this process involves coming to recognize the differences between the various passions, as they move within one's own experience. With this in mind, we will consider briefly some of Edith Stein's autobiographical writings to see where she identifies these passions rising up within her and some of the decisions she might make concerning how to act in relation to them.

A. Irascible passions:

i. **Hope** is described as a future good considered as arduous or difficult but possible to attain by one's own power or by another's power, and it also involves a choice to approach the good. In her autobiography, Edith Stein describes her experience of hope while working as a ^{(Wal) war I} nurse on a typhoid ward in 1915. She observes the following:

I had come to like working on the typhoid station very much. It was an illness about which doctors could do very little, but a great deal depended on careful nursing attention. We were proud of the fact that so few cases proved fatal. But often wresting a victim out of death's clutches meant a tough battle. Especially when accompanied by pneumonia, a severe infection often affected the heart so drastically that it threatened to give up. The first few times I witnessed such a collapse I thought for certain the end had come. The patient appeared exactly like someone on the point of death. But I soon learned one must not give up hope even then; after an injection of camphor, the heart would begin to function again.³

The future good of this hope was the life and health of the patient. The difficulty to attain this good was described further by Edith Stein as she detailed the nursing efforts to keep the patient from walking, from eating solid food which could perforate the damaged intestines, and so forth.

ii. **Despair**, the opposite passion from hope, was described by St. Thomas as a movement away from a good which is considered as too arduous and impossible to attain; in short, it is an effect of fear and involves a choice to withdraw. In the structure of Edith Stein's personality, despair was rarely present. However, at times in her letters, she offers a glimpse into this passion when she reflects on the difficulties being Husserl's assistant and its interference with her own philosophical work. In the following letter to Roman Ingarden (1917) she says the following:

I have long been aware that I must learn to go into greater depth. In any case, I believe this is the weak spot of my talent. Basically, I work more with my poor understanding than with intuitive gifts; perhaps that is why I am especially suited to be the Master's assistant. But, obviously I saw the whole thing merely as a plan I would fulfil in the course of my lifetime. Since I have come here, I sometimes have the scary feeling that I no longer have my life as firmly in my hand as I used to.⁴

Stein describes her despair at not being able to do her own work because of her responsibilities to Husserl, and at the same time her despair that Husserl is too tired to work quickly ahead on his own texts and is not able to work on them without her help. So she withdraws from her own work at this time, to devote herself to Husserl's work, while later she withdraws from Husserl's work and turns again to her own.

iii. The passion of fear is also one that we find rarely mentioned in Edith Stein's autobiographical writings. This does not imply that she did not experience the passion of fear, for she describes herself moments when she is afraid, but she usually acts rather quickly to overcome it through acts of daring. For example, in one letter she described her fear when she was asked to sing a song by herself to the Carmelite nuns before entering the convent. She remarked that she would have much rather lectured in front of a thousand people! However, Edith overcame her fear and sang.

St. Thomas states that fear is a passion towards a future evil which is difficult and unable to be resisted. It often leads to a movement of the will to avoid a particular evil. Edith Stein describes her Jewish mother's response of fear to her decision to become a Carmelite nun. In one letter she says directly: "My mother is now beginning to suspect and to fear."⁵ Her mother's passion of fear led to denial and increasing bitterness, rather than to hope and daring.

*about
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to victory*

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iv. The opposite of fear, or daring is described by Thomas as a future evil to which the good of victory is conjoined when the person chooses to pursue the fearful evil and overcome it. If we contrast again Edith and her mother, but this time return to an earlier period of her nursing work during World War I, we will see the passions of fear and daring at play. Edith writes in her autobiography about her mother's resistance to her decision to serve as a nurse:

I had heavy opposition to face from my mother. I did not even tell her that it was a lazaretto [i.e., for those with contagious diseases.] She was well aware that no suggestion of hers that my life would be endangered could ever induce me to change my plans. So as an ultimate deterrent, she told me all the soldiers arrived from the front with clothes overrun by lice and that I could not possibly escape infestation. Naturally that was a scourge I dreaded- but if the people in the trenches all had to suffer from it why should I be better off than they?...

When this tactic failed, my mother declared with all the energy she could muster: "You will not go with my permission."

My reply was every bit as determined. "Then I must go without your permission."

My sisters were downright shocked at my harsh retort... Now, however, granite was striking granite. My mother said no more and was very silent and depressed for several days, a mood which always affected the entire household.⁶

Edith went to war, and turned out to be a highly effective nurse, who paid special attention to the conditions of sterilization and cleanliness. She was so effective, in fact, that she often helped in surgery.

In one reflection we can see her complete overcoming of all fear of the condition of the soldiers coming from the front:

One morning Sr. Alwine met me in the hall; she called out to me in passing that a transport of a thousand wounded was expected. ... All new admissions were taken to the baths immediately upon arrival. From there they came directly to the surgery for bandaging. I jumped for joy at the thought of our getting something to do.

Sister Anni and I got our sterilizer going at once and
prepared for a seige.⁷

It will be good to keep this image of Edith Stein's delight in order and cleanliness in mind when we reflect together on an incident that occurred in the final days of her life as she was being transported with others to Auschwitz.

A postal worker noticed the train ^{stopped} on the next track and gave the following description:

A minute or so later, a guard opened a sliding door on one of the cars. With dismay, Wieners [the postal worker] noticed it was packed with people who were jammed together, cowering on the floor. The stench coming from the car almost overpowered the men standing outside.

Then a woman in nun's clothing stepped into the opening. Wieners looked at her with such commiseration that she spoke to him: "It's awful. We have nothing by way of containers for sanitation needs."⁸

In this example, Edith Stein's passion was not fear, but rather pain and aversion. As we will see later, she overcame even these passions in this situation of ultimate degradation, to act out of consideration for others.

v. The fifth irascible passion, according to St. Thomas is anger. He describes it as the memory of an unjust slight or injury done against a person that causes sorrow. Anger is a very common natural passion. For example, it is likely that the story I just relayed about Edith Stein's interaction with the postal worker caused a stirring of the passion of anger in you. We can learn from her how to respond to this passion.

In a candid moment Edith Stein shares with us in her autobiography her own anger at a Physician who grabbed her arm in an overtly friendly and possessive manner in the operating room. She describes the incident as follows:

[He] was the only one ever to make undesirable overtures to me.

In the surgery while I was holding a patient's arm rigid to enable him to splint it, the doctor caught hold of my hand. I could not let go of the wounded man for fear of attracting everyone's attention. ... So a look was my only weapon; it did succeed in getting me released. To my great annoyance the obtrusive fellow later whispered to me in the presence of the patients: "Don't be mad at me!"⁹

The passion of anger which Edith Stein so well describes at this unbecoming action of the doctor, could lead to two very different kinds of action: one would be evil- as it would seek revenge by inflicting something hurtful on the doctor; the other would be good- as it would aim to redress order by some kind of just action. Edith Stein chose the latter. She met the doctor the next day in a private office and told him clearly what she thought of his behaviour. She records the results: "After this 'speech' I left the room - half satisfied that I had not minced words with the fellow and half mortified because of the embarrassing scene. In any case it did the trick. From then on he was fearlessly polite..."¹⁰

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B. Concupscible passions:

- i. The passion of Love has various species: friendship, natural love, sensitive love, intellectual love, dilection, and charity. In general, love is a kind of union with an apprehended good. A careful reading of the correspondence of Edith Stein, reveals her familiarity with all the natural passions of love. She was devoted to her family, friends, and studies, and as she advanced in maturity she grew in charity. While Roman Ingarden and Gertrud von le Fort were among her most well known friends at certain times in her life, her sister Rosa was a friend throughout her whole life.

The important place that love held in her life is attested to by this extract from a letter

written in 1933 to Reverend Mother Petra Bruning, OSU about her decision to enter the Carmelites: "But the best part is that the spirit of Carmel is love, and this spirit is very much alive in this house."¹¹ We have not yet distinguished between the human passion of love and the divine infusion of love, as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Of course, when Edith Stein mentions the spirit of Carmel, she is referring to Divine love even more than the passion of love, but this statement attests to the value she attributes to love.

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min



ii. The opposite passion of love, is hatred. St. Thomas describes it as a force of repulsion from or repugnance for someone or a class of things which had been preceded by love. *[is connected to the love hated, and who experienced as something hateful]*
 While Edith Stein does not give evidence of this human passion in her writings, she does reflect on a supernatural "hatred" of objects and experiences of natural love when she writes about the mystical life of St. John of the Cross. *[which we will consider later.]*

iii. While we could chose many examples of the next concupiscible passion, or desire, one simple one will suffice. In her autobiography, Edith Stein describes herself as a young girl:

In my dreams I always foresaw a brilliant future for myself. I dreamed about happiness and fame for I was convinced that I was destined for something great and that I did not belong at all in the narrow, bourgeois circumstances into which I had been born.¹²

Her description fits perfectly the Thomistic analysis of desire as a craving or inclination towards a good not yet possessed. In this example, we see an intellectual desire for happiness, occurring in the soul alone, and a sensual desire to escape her bourgeois circumstances, occurring in soul and body.

iv. Aversion, the opposite passion preceded by desire, is an inclination away from an evil not yet possessed. We see Edith Stein grappling with this passion in her autobiographical account of an invitation to a party at the hospital she worked at during the war. She makes remarks like: "I have no intention of going. After all, I don't even know the gentleman...I had very little desire to go; after all, we are not here to have a good time."¹³ Then after she was persuaded to go, her aversion grew. She uses phrases as the party progressed like: "I grew a bit uneasy... Finally I sat there in silence, watching wide-eyed all that was going on around me. One doctor held one of the nurses, who wanted no more to drink, by the head and poured liquor into her. I became more and more uneasy. What all might follow?"¹⁴

After eventually being able to extricate herself from the situation she reflected back: "But still trembling from revulsion, I was indignant that such behavior could go on under the very roof that harbored such critically ill persons."¹⁵ We see here, Edith Stein's cognizance of the way in which her passion of aversion was joined by the passion of anger.

We now come to a brief consideration of the last two fundamental passions according to

St. Thomas: pleasure and pain, or in their intellectual form joy and sorrow.

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to educate
as joy
sorrow*

v. The passion of joy often finds its way into Stein's writings. Joy is a movement of the soul towards union with a suitable present good in keeping with the things nature. If it is sensual, then we speak of pleasure, if intellectual, then of joy. In letter to Jacques and Raissa Maritain (1933) she writes: "You have given me great joy with your beautiful book..."¹⁶ In her reflections on her early struggles as a graduate student working on her PhD dissertation for her Professor Reinach she notes the lack of joy she later experienced:

Moreover, I cannot recall that I experienced at that time any of the deep joy which later habitually accompanied my work once I had surmounted the painful, preliminary difficulties. I had not yet reached that plateau of clarity on which the mind, having gained an insight, can rest, and from which, with then perception of new, unfolding paths, one proceeds confidently. I still seemed to be groping my way through a dense fog.¹⁷

She did write her draft, show it to her professor, and get a positive response. After she finished his suggested revisions and completed the dissertation, Edith describes a moment when she went for a walk and stopped in front of Reinach's home wondering when he would return from a lengthy absence. A taxi drove up, and soon after the lights went on in his study. She observes:

That told me enough; I swung around and went home. It is impossible to express how much joy and gratitude I felt; even today, more than twenty years later, I can still draw some of that deep sigh of relief.¹⁸

vi. Finally, we discover Edith Stein experiencing the passion of sorrow, also in relation to her philosophical work. Sorrow is a movement in response to a loss of a good or the presence of an evil. While in the sensitive appetite we speak of pain, in the intellective appetite we speak of sorrow. In a very telling letter to Roman Ingarden (1918) Stein describes her sorrow over Edmund Husserl's treatment of her person and work:

Basically it is the thought of being ~~of someone's disposition~~ that I cannot bear. I can place myself at the service of something, and I can do all manner of things for the love of someone, but to be at the service of a person, in short- to obey, is something I cannot do. And if Husserl will not accustom himself once more to treat me as a collaborator in the work---as I have always considered our situation to be and he, in theory, did likewise--- then we shall have to part company.¹⁹

In a letter to Ingarden the following week, we see the results, and a further admixture of

passions which includes some sorrow:

...The Master has graciously accepted my resignation. His letter was most friendly---though not without a somewhat reproachful undertone. So now I am free, and I believe it is good that I am, even if, for the moment, I am not exactly happy....²⁰

As we can see by these examples of the eleven fundamental passions according to Thomas Aquinas, Edith Stein was well aware of the movement of various passions within her, and she engaged in an interior dialogue with them as part of the everyday activities of her life.

We will now turn our focus more directly to particular goods she chose to affirm in her passion for philosophy, her passion for woman's identity, and her passion for Christ.

II: Edith Steins Passion for Philosophy

The fundamental passions in our author here include her intellectual desire for truth, her love for truth, and her intellectual delight and joy in discovering truth. If we turn again to the story of Edith Stein's life we can trace the development in her discovery of her passion for philosophy as she describes in her own words how she forged a friendship with three girl friends studying psychology, medicine, and philosophy. "Without a moment's hesitation,...we plunged into Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. I no longer recall how far into it we got. With death-defying fervor, during one semester, we plowed through all of Meumann's *Experimental Psychology*..."²¹

Then for Edith the shared intellectual excitement flowed over into her private life as well.

She continues her account:

I had just finished my first semester (at the university) and had brought along Spinoza's *Ethics* to read during that vacation. I was never found without the small book. If we went into the woods, I

carried it in the pocket of my rainproof cape; and while the others lolled around under the trees, I would search out a deer lookout, climb up to it, and then become absorbed, alternately, in deductions about the sole substance, and then in the view of sky, mountains, and woods.²²

However, as we mentioned previously, World War I interrupted her studies, and when she returned, her experience and maturity as a philosopher drove her to attempt original work. For Stein, philosophy was primarily an attempt to grasp the essential characteristics of things through a phenomenological method which "bracketed out" accidents of existence and honed in on the very core of the identity of fundamental phenomena of consciousness. She provides us with a remarkable description of this process as she experienced it in 1916.

Now I resolutely put aside everything derived from other sources and began, entirely at rock bottom, to make an objective examination of the problem of empathy according to phenomenological methods. Oh, what a difference compared to my former efforts! Of course, each morning I seated myself at my desk with some trepidation. I was like a tiny dot in limitless space. Would anything come to me out of this great expanse--- anything which I could grasp? I lay as far back as I could in my chair, and strenuously focused my mind on what at the moment I deemed the most vital question. After a while, it seemed as though light began to dawn. Then I was able, at least, to formulate a question and to find ways to attack it. And as soon as one point became clear, new questions arose in various directions (Husserl used to call these "new horizons"). ... [P]age after page was filled. The writing would bring a rosy glow to my face, and an unfamiliar feeling of happiness surged through me.... I was amazed at all the knowledge I now had about things of which I had been totally unaware a few hours earlier.²³

The particular work Edith was developing here was a study of the nature of empathy, or the way in which one individual could experience another individual in an intersubjective "mutual exchange of information."²⁴ Stein probes the place of feelings in the development of personality, and the extraordinary way in which one person is able to grasp the value of the

feelings of another through the phenomenon of empathy. No longer are passions simply locked in a flowing pattern within an isolated individual, but now they are viewed as opening the door to relationship with another.

However, before one person empathizes with another, he or she needs to learn how to identify the way the passions move within the self. We will turn now to consider how Edith Stein reflects in *The Problem of Empathy* on the identity of feelings and passions. First of all, she describes how passions are "pregnant" because they reveal an object of value.

Now we come to feelings in the pregnant sense. As said earlier, these feelings are always feelings of something. Every time I feel, I am turned toward an object, something of the object is given me, and I see a level of the object. ...When I am joyful over a good deed, this is how the deed's goodness or its positive value faces me. But I must know about the deed to be joyful over it---knowledge is fundamental to joy.²⁵

Secondly, values revealed by these feelings have different depths, and arrange themselves in a hierarchy of greater or lesser depth in our personality. Moving from the passion of joy to the passion of anger, Stein reflects as follows:

Anger over the loss of a piece of jewelry comes from a more superficial level or does not penetrate as deeply as losing the same object as the souvenir of a loved one. Furthermore, pain over the loss of this person himself would be even deeper. This discloses essential relationships among the hierarchy of felt values, the depth classification of value feelings, and the level of classification of the person exposed in these feelings. Accordingly, every time we advance in the value realm, we also make acquisitions in the realm of our own personality.²⁶

Stein continues to analyze the depth of the passions, not only within a single passion such as anger, mentioned above, but also in the interrelations of the passions. She reflects that the pain over losing a loved one through death is not as deep as the love for this person. However, if the

loss occurs rather through deception, and the person continues to exist, then the depth of the pain over the loss is of the same depth as the love.

In order to comprehend the way that passions or feelings reveal various depths of values we have to learn how to "turn our feeling into an object" for our reflection, to think about it. So, for example, if we experience joy at hearing a beautiful concert, we can reflect afterwards about this, and experience a joy over our joy. "In this way I become aware of myself as subject and as object. Again the original and the reflected feeling of value will take hold in different depths."²⁷

Stein gives a four dimensional analysis of feelings, and depth is only the first dimension. The second dimension she calls "the reach" of the feelings. Again we will let her describe this in her own words:

We can say that every feeling has a certain mood component that causes the feeling to be spread throughout the "I" from the feeling's place of origin and fill it up. Starting from a peripheral level, a slight resentment can fill me "entirely," but it can also happen upon a deep joy that prevents it from pushing further forward to the center. Now, in turn, this joy progresses victoriously from the center and fills out all the layers above it.²⁸

The variety of reaches of feelings- or their breadth- are compared with the luminosity of different sources of light similar to the varying degrees of brightness of colours.

The third dimension of feelings, added to depth and reach, is their duration. "They not only fill up the "I" in its depth and width, but also in the "length" of experienced time they remain in it."²⁹ Finally, Stein notes a fourth dimension of "intensity" of feeling, separate from depth, reach, and duration. Consequently, every passion or feeling that we experience can be analyzed by reflecting upon each of these four factors to determine the value which they have

for our personality in any particular situation.

At the beginning of our paper, we mentioned that passions were only one factor of the human person, and that the intellect and will were two equally important factors. We can begin to see how rich is the structure of the human personality that the most intense passions tend to set the will in motion almost automatically, unless we develop the capacity to think about them before choosing and acting. By considering the dimensions of our feelings, as noted above, we can discover the hierarchy of values that exist within us. She argues: "This feeling of value is the source of all cognitive striving and 'what is at the bottom' of all cognitive willing. "³⁰

After this brief introduction to the way we must reflect on the depth, reach, duration, and intensity of our passions, by reflecting on them as objects, after we have reflexively experienced them, as subjects, we are ready to turn to her philosophical analysis of empathy, or the way we grasp another person's passion (the foreign person, as she identifies it). Stein introduces empathy as follows:

As my own person is constituted in primordial spiritual (intellectual and willing) acts, so the foreign person is constituted in emphatically experienced acts. I experience his every action as proceeding from a will and this, in turn, meaningfully motivates the expectation of future possible volitions and actions.

Accordingly, a single action and also a single bodily expression, such as a look or a laugh, can give me a glimpse into the kernel of the person.³¹

Through empathy we come into relationship with another body which we grasp as a living body. Someone is feeling something, and we immediately grasp the presence of her or his passion. Stein describes this human capacity of empathy as a "crossing of the boundary" of two separate physical beings. It makes intersubjective experience possible. It makes knowledge of an outer world possible as well.

Edith Stein's phenomenology of empathy is not naive. She does not suggest that we are always correct when we experience empathy with another person, just as we are not always correct when we identify our own passions. In a personal description she explains how we learn to correct our first empathetic impressions much as we correct our sensations,

When I empathize the pain of the injured in looking at a wound, I tend to look at his face to have my experience confirmed in his expression of suffering. Should I instead perceive a cheerful or peaceful countenance, I would say to myself that he must not really be having any pain, for pain in its meaning motivates unhappy feelings visible in an expression. Further testing that consists of new acts of empathy and possible inferences based on them can also lead me to another correction: the sensual feeling is indeed present but its expression is voluntarily repressed; or perhaps this person certainly feels the pain but, because his feeling is perverted, he does not suffer from it but enjoys it.³²

So the philosopher Edith Stein keeps probing to get to the ever deeper level of truth about the other person, as well as about her own identity through corrective impressions and acts.

At this point we need to move toward's a consideration of Stein's passion about women's identity. In the *Problem of Empathy* she laid the ground work for this shift from consideration of individuals, or foreign individuals at large, to collective individuals of the same type. "We not only learn to make ourselves into objects, as earlier, but through empathy with 'related natures,' i.e., persons of our type, what is 'sleeping' in us is developed."³³ Individuals of the same sex, or gender, are such related natures.

III: Edith Stein's Passion for Woman's Identity

Interest in women's identity rose up early in Stein's life. She tells us that as early as 1907, in her circle of university friends: "[at that time]¹¹ we were all passionately moved by the

women's rights movement.³⁴ This consisted primarily in defending woman's right to a career and a family. Within the next few years it turned towards woman's right to vote. She is very clear about this:

My deep conviction of social responsibility also made me decidedly favor women's suffrage. At that time, this was still far from being an integral part of the women's rights movement. The Prussian Society for Women's Right to Vote, which I joined with my women friends because it advocated full political equality for women, was made up mostly of socialists.³⁵

By 1919 Edith Stein began to feel the effect of discrimination against women directly.

After completing her PhD dissertation, and being recognized by many as Husserl's most brilliant student, she was unable at first to get an official consideration for a lectureship because of her gender. In a letter to Fritz Kaufmann she states:

I received a letter from Hermann, the department head, that was meant to appear as an official notification, for a pre-commission had decided not even to judge my thesis since the habilitation of women continues to create many difficulties.

... You may tell that to Husserl, and add further that I am not crushed. I only regret that now I am again faced with a decision about what to do in the future.³⁶

As mentioned previously she was hired to work as Husserl's private assistant for several years.

During this time of working with Husserl her conversion to Catholicism took place.

While many factors paved the way such as the conversion from Judaism to Catholicism by her early mentor Max Scheler, the moment of illumination occurred 1921 as she read St. Teresa of Avila's Life, and concluded that it was the truth.³⁷ Edith Stein's love of the truth was, she claimed, her guide and constant prayer. After a period of instruction she entered the Church on New Year's Day, 1922. Shortly afterwards she began teaching German literature and philosophy at a Dominican Girls College in Speyer, a job she held for eight years.

Two very important intellectual directions unfolded for Edith Stein during this next period of her life: the discovery of St. Thomas Aquinas and a dedication to a philosophical reflection on woman.³⁸ From 1925-1931 she entered into a close professional relationship with Fr. Erich Przywara, S.J., who led her to translate Cardinal Newman's Letters and Journals and The Idea of a University as well as St. Thomas' Disputed Questions on Truth. Throughout her life Edith Stein sought to integrate the original thought of St. Thomas and Husserl, or scolasticism and phenomenology, and for this reason she is credited with being a main force in developing a new German neo-Scolasticism.

In 1928 Stein began her public addresses on women, first to the Catholic women teachers of Bavaria on the "Function of woman in national life." Then as a result of her growing popularity she gave an address to the Congress of the German Association of Catholic Graduates in Salzburg in 1930 on "The ethos of women's vocations". In 1932 Dr. Stein accepted a position as lecturer at the Educational Institute at Münster to develop a Catholic science of the education of women. Soon after she further developed her thinking in "Problems of Women's Education." In these works her knowledge of phenomenology and Thomism are brought to bear on the question of the differences and similarities of man and woman.

In a letter written in 1931 to Sr. Callista Kopf, OP Edith Stein shares her change of approach to her passion for woman's identity.

During my years in the Gymnasium and as a young student (at the university), I was a radical feminist. Then I lost interest in the whole question. Now, because I am obliged to do so, I seek purely objective solutions... ||

The insistence that the sexual differences are "stipulated by the body alone" is questionable from various points of view, (1) if anima = forma corporis, [the soul equals the form of the body], then bodily differentiation constitutes an index of differentiation in

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the spirit. 2) Matter serves form, not the reverse. That strongly suggests that the difference in the psyche is the primary one.³⁹

The insistence on the lived body-soul unity of the human person was fundamental to Stein's analysis of woman's identity. Before turning to a direct consideration of some aspects of her philosophy of sex and gender, it is helpful to situate what she calls her "objective solutions" in an historical context.

| The pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and others all philosophized about how matter and form functioned in the respective identities of men and women. | Plato thought that human identity resided in a sexless soul that could be attached to either a male or female body in different cycles of reincarnation. | Aristotle argued that the soul was the form of the body, in a living unity. He understood the soul to be the principle of individuation of different species, and matter to be the principle of individuation of individuals within each species. He was left with the problem of how to explain the fact that half or so of the human species was female, and the other half male. Aristotle introduced a principle of contrariety, in which the female was a privation of the male, like cold from hot, and thus the female became understood as a misformed or misbegotten male.⁴⁰

| St. Augustine was aware of the influence of this theory of the female as an imperfect male on the Christian belief that in the resurrection all imperfections will be removed, and so some people concluded logically that in the resurrection women would be turned into men. Augustine, however, | rejected this sequence of reasoning | and argued that it was no imperfection to be a woman, and so heaven would include members of both sexes. St. Albert and St. Thomas struggled with the Aristotelian heritage, and tried to introduce new factors to mitigate the devaluation of the female in Aristotelian metaphysics, but they were not able to achieve a perfect

solution. They argued basically, that even though in the state of nature the female is an imperfect male, in the state of grace, females may be as perfect or more perfect (in the case of Mary) than any male. It all depended upon the sanctity of the individual man or woman.

Hildegard chart

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was ^{the} first philosopher to provide a thorough philosophy of a genuine complementarity of men and woman (i.e. an equality of dignity and worth joined to a claim for significant differentiation). Hildegard used a medieval theory of the elements and humours to elaborate her theory of sex identity. We could say, borrowing a phrase from contemporary academic terminology that she was interdisciplinary in that she drew from physics in her consideration of the elements earth, air, fire, and water; from chemistry with her consideration of the humours of phlegm, blood, choler, and black bile; from biology with her analysis of the role of seed and blood in human generation and her consideration of anatomical structure; from psychology with her reflection on human character; from philosophy with her analysis of the human person as a whole; and from theology with a reflection on how human beings are called to develop in relation to God who created them.

Hildegard's extraordinary system of explanation of sex and gender differentiation is summarized in the three charts below:⁴¹

Hildegard's Approach to Sex Differentiation through natural science

Perspectives	male	human	female
"physics"	more of elements fire and earth	elements of fire, air, water, and earth	more of elements air and water
"chemistry"	less humours	humours of phlegm, blood, choler, and black bile	more humours
"biology"	deposits fertile seed	reproduces itself as living organism	warms and strengthens seed to termination

Hildegard's Four Types of Women

Type I Type II Type III Type IV

muscular structure	very heavy	moderately heavy	delicate	meagre
blood	clean, red	whiter	drier	slimy
colour of skin	clear and white	sullen	pale	dark
fertility	moderate	very	partial	rare
menses	light	moderate	heavy	very heavy
character	artistic, content	efficient, masculine, strict	intellectual, benevolent, loyal, chaste	unstable, ill-humoured
possible diseases after early menopause	depression, melancholy, side pains, unhealthy glandular secretions	insanity, problems with spleen, dropsy, tumours	paralysis, unbalanced, liver problems, cancer	abdominal pains, spinal sprains, early death
attitude towards men	charming and healthy when with men	driven by sexual desire for men	loyal but can not keep men's interest	happier without men

Hildegard's Four Types of Men

	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
blood	fiery	fiery and airy	airy and black bile	weak in all respects
colour of skin	red hue	mixed red and white hue	sombre	unclean and pale
fertility	very	moderate	partial	infertile
character	hearty and hale	balanced	very dangerous, no moderation	weak, effeminate
children	tend to be unrestrained, course-mannered	balanced, happy, well-mannered	mean or evil children	no children
attitude towards women	treat women like sex objects	honourable and fruitful relations with women	physically abusive of and hateful towards women	indifferent towards women

In view of the need to return to our consideration of Edith Stein's passion for the same topic, we will have to limit our review of Hildegard to noting particularly where the emotions emerge in her analysis. Since Hildegard predates St. Thomas by a century, she did not have the benefit of his analysis of the human passions. However, she does argue that the second type of man is the most balanced and able to enter into fruitful relations with women both in marriage and in consecrated life and celibate friendships.

One further important historical context we need to note is that Edith Stein's lectures on women pre-dates by nineteen years that of Simone de Beauvoir, who is usually considered to be the first contemporary philosopher to give an interdisciplinary analysis of woman's identity in her pathbreaking work *The Second Sex*. So it is significant indeed that Stein develops a contemporary interdisciplinary framework for her analysis of sex and gender. In her essay on "Problems of Women's Education," first given as a lecture in 1930, she delineates four

complementary methods of approach of woman's identity: the natural sciences including anatomy and experimental psychology, the liberal arts [and what we would call the social sciences] including literature, behaviouristic psychology, anthropology, and sociology; philosophy using the phenomenological method; and theology including dogma, scripture studies, and Church tradition.⁴²

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Her own work focuses primarily on the philosophical method which she seeks to identify through cognition the permanence of forms which are found in species. This cognitive study is the objective order which she referred to in her letter explaining how she was approaching woman's identity. Edith Stein came to the conclusion that women and men are marked by a different permanence in form which she called the sub-species contained within the human species. This difference was permanent and persisted through time. She summarizes her views in the following important paragraph:⁴³

I am convinced that the species humanity embraces the double species man and woman. That the essence of the complete human being is characterized by this duality; and that the entire structure of the essence demonstrates the specific character. There is a difference, not only in body structure and in particular physiological functions, but also in the entire corporeal life. The relationship of soul and body is different in man and woman; the relation of soul to body differs in their psychic life as well as that of the spiritual faculties to each other. The feminine [female human] species expresses a unity and wholeness of the total psychosomatic personality and a harmonious development of faculties. The masculine [male human] species strives to enhance individual abilities in order that they may attain their highest achievements.⁴⁴

This paragraph contains the core of Edith Stein's analysis of the separate species of woman and of man. It implies that differences between a man and a woman are not accidental, but essential to their respective identities.⁴⁵ It is important to note that Stein's theory has a three-fold level

of analysis: species of humanity, sub-species of woman and of man, and sub-category of individuality. The latter category, or individuality, is crucial to her philosophy, because through it an individual person, as a real existent, forms a particular identity as a man or a woman which is oriented, but not bound, by characteristics identified as masculine or feminine.⁴⁶

The chart below summarizes the content of Stein's theory of the three levels of human identity:

Stein's philosophy of Species⁴⁷

HUMAN SPECIES

SPECIES OF WOMAN

SPECIES OF MAN

<p>1. soul more intensely connected to all parts of the body; 2. female corporeal structure of the body oriented towards supporting growth of new life within as mother</p>	<p>lived-body-soul unity female/male structure</p>	<p>1. soul more detached from parts of the body; 2. male corporeal structure of the body oriented towards reproducing by detachment of seed as father</p>
<p>1. receives world inwardly through emotions and more affected inwardly by the lived experience of the body; 2. intellect judges world received emotionally through comprehension of value of existent in its totality 3. will emphasizes personal and holistic choices</p>	<p>faculties: sensitive (emotions) intellect will feminine/masculine structure</p>	<p>1. receives world through intellect and less affected by the lived experience of the body; 2. intellect judges the world received intellectually in a compartmentalized way; 3. will emphasizes exterior, specialized choices</p>
<p>feminine professions: nursing, social work, education, holistic medicine, including also gynaecology and paediatrics, governess, translator, editor, research in humanities and arts, bureaucratic work, administration, and politics</p>	<p>Individual professional work woman/man structure</p>	<p>masculine professions: factory work, hard physical labour in industry, trade, and agriculture, business, national or municipal service, technology, trade, legislature, chemistry, mathematics, theoretical physics, clerical work, administration, natural science, philosophy, and specialized medicine</p>

60 minutes

Right away we should note in this study of the passion of Edith Stein that she gives a special place to emotions in woman's identity. She argues that women by nature primarily receive the world first through their feelings, emotions, and passions, while men do not by nature do this. This feminine experience of the world is rooted in the different female structure of the lived experience of the body. As we will see, she also argues that a man can learn this

response through education.

Two further important points about this analysis of species need to be made: the first concerns the freedom of the individual to develop a unique personal identity, and the second concerns the value for society of the complementary identities of women and men. Stein is adamant that individuals can freely choose to develop characteristics different from the ones to which they have a natural attraction through the different structure of their lived-body-soul inner form. In one context she states: "And who would deny the intellect and will of girls? That would be questioning their full humanity."⁴⁸ Or conversely, a man can, through free actions of the will either surrender to or reject emotional stimulations or interior and exterior formative influences.⁴⁹ Human life is always individual, and therefore, actions within it can express varying degrees of freedom.

In addition, even though a permanence of inner form and structure is identified in the concept of human species, or species of woman and species of man, Stein argues that species is a developmental concept. Consequently, the inner form gives a certain starting point to the structure, but the determination of the individual life by the free man or woman offers a wide range of possibilities which are much broader than the starting point:

the species does not come about in ready-made form at the beginning of existence; rather, the individual develops progressively in a process dependent on time. This process is not unequivocally predetermined but depends rather on several variable factors, among others, on man's freedom which enables him to work towards his own formation and that of others.⁵⁰

This means that the individual woman has an interior structure that can be characterized as the nexus {woman-female-feminine and masculine}, and the individual man has an interior structure that can be characterized as the nexus {man-male-masculine and feminine}. As the individual

freely works within a dual species of human and either as man or woman, he or she continues to unfold, through free acts, the temporal development of a particular sub species from complementary male or female starting points. Stein concludes: "the species man and woman are also fully realized only in the total course of human development."⁵¹

Concerning the second point mentioned above, Edith Stein does not imply that women ought to practice only feminine professions or men masculine professions. She states clearly: "...there is no profession which cannot be practised by a woman."⁵² In fact, she argues more strongly that it would be very good for society in general if women moved into areas which had been predominately held by men previously. She concludes: "Thus the participation of women in the most diverse professional disciplines could be a blessing for the entire society, private or public, precisely if the specifically feminine ethos would be preserved."⁵³ By 'feminine ethos' she means the tendency to look towards the holistic, to be concerned with the development of people, to practice empathy as a genuine ground for inter-subjectivity, and so forth. In another example, Stein ponders the "great sickness of our time" which she identifies as an "inner disunion, a complete deficiency of set convictions and strong principles, an aimless drifting." She goes on to argue that "only whole human beings as we have described them are immune to the contemporary sickness." Then she concludes: "Consequently, when women themselves are once again whole persons and when they help others to become so, they create healthy, energetic spores supplying healthy energy to the entire national body."⁵⁴ One of the ways a woman can move towards this integral wholeness is by educating herself in part through traditional masculine disciplines such as the natural sciences or philosophy, at the same time as she becomes more conscious of her own natural orientation towards feminine values.

*Urge to
Stein chart 2*

Both Hildegard and Stein are in agreement on a key aspect of a typology of masculine and feminine, namely that a man has both masculine and feminine characteristics and a woman has both masculine and feminine characteristics, although the relation of men and women to these characteristics is gender determined. If a person is male, then a more natural relation to the masculine and a more socialized aspect to the feminine characteristics is exhibited; while if a person is female, there is a more natural relation to feminine and a more socialized aspect to masculine characteristics. In the following chart, those specifically masculine and feminine characteristics noted by their positive and negative forms are summarized.⁵⁵

Stein's Types of Gender Differentiation

positive - feminine - negative		positive - masculine - negative	
tendency towards union	urge to lose the self in another human being	tendency towards detachment	brutal despotism over others and especially women
dedication towards developing others to completion	too much curiosity about others	dedication to a discipline	enslavement to work
orientation towards concrete whole person	placing too much emphasis on self or own family	orientation towards specialization	atrophy of one's humanity
special capacity for empathy	an inability to accept criticism without seeing it as an attack	special capacity for objectivity	degeneracy of too much abstraction

1 hr 5 min

Again we need to note in our analysis of the passion of Edith Stein, the special place of empathy in woman's identity. This very brief summary of Edith Stein's analysis of sex and gender differentiation gives some indication of the incredible richness of her work in this area. Her passion for philosophy and her passion for woman's identity as concrete objects of her passion of the desire for and love of truth is well documented. We will now move to a

45 min

consideration of the fourth level^{Kind} of passion her life reveals, that of her movement towards a complete identification with the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

IV: Edith Steins Sharing in the Passion of Christ

In this section we will move from passion, to compassion, from empathy with a foreign person, to empathy with Christ! This move involves a shift from simply living and adjusting to one's own suffering, to actually sharing in another's suffering as an act of love for that person.

Again, if we turn to Edith Stein's autobiographical writings we will be led through this profound movement in her being, which became the very purpose of her life in its final years.

As we mentioned previously Edith Stein was never able to secure a position as a university lecturer because of her sex. In a certain way, she was thwarted as a woman, and this caused her to suffer. She shares this in a candid letter to a Benedictine sister in 1932. "I have to put up quite a struggle to justify my scholarly existence... with the situation created by my ten-year exclusion from the continuity of [academic] work and the lack, rooted so deeply within me, of contact with the contemporary scene."⁵⁶ One consequence of this exclusion was that she had to teach herself Thomistic philosophy and received rather severe criticism this same year about her lack of comprehension of scholastic controversies from one reviewer. In a letter to him she refers to herself as "an unsuspecting little David [who] had to attack Goliath" and that she has become well aware of her deficiencies, and if she were younger she would begin to study philosophy all over again in a different way, but that she was too old for that now and had to just do her best with the tools that she has.⁵⁷

Hitler came to power the very next year, in 1933, and soon much more radical suffering

*Chart
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fell on her. Even her opportunity to teach was removed, She writes in May: "I am not permitted to give any lectures this semester (because of my Jewish descent)." ⁵⁸ Edith Stein decided that she would now be free to follow a call to a religious vocation to become a Carmelite nun, since she no longer was able to contribute to the world, an obligation she felt very keenly.

Some of the sisters in my own community visited the convent Edith Stein joined in Cologne, and they were told some stories about her "grand entrance." One of the sisters described how they wondered about this famous lecturer, at age 42, beginning as a Postulant in religious life. ~~When~~ After her entrance celebration, Edith never bothered to look at the charge list, which stated that she was assigned to clean up after the celebrations. She just went to her cell to be silent and pray. So the community met and said that one sister must go to tell her that she did not clean up her junk, great doctor that she was! The one who ~~went~~ ^{was sent} ~~continued her story~~ ^{felt like} ~~because she was~~ ^{but saying} she was a "no one", poorly educated, and she went in blushing and stammering to face Edith Stein. ~~When~~ Edith (who in religion was known as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) said to her: "How can I be a true religious if I am not obedient and share my responsibilities?"

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She knelt down and begged forgiveness of the sister who had confronted her. The sister related that she thought to herself: "This woman is destined for something beyond."

Sister Teresa

Since Edith Stein's name was changed to Sister Benedicta of the Cross, for the remainder of this analysis, I will refer to her with her common religious name Sister Benedicta. ~~When you~~ ^{In} ~~read~~ ^{the reader} her correspondence from this early period in her vocation the first thing that strikes ~~is~~ ^{the reader} is her frequent use of the word "joy." In one 1934 letter alone she uses the phrases "mutual joy", "great joy", "a joyous day," and "my greatest joy".⁵⁹ As mentioned previously, there is a distinction between the passion of joy, which wells up inside a person as a normal human

emotion, and the gift of joy infused by the Holy Spirit. The latter is usually understood as the spiritual fruit of a resurrection from some kind of experience of death. Of course, Sister Benedicta's joy in her new found vocation did follow after years of suffering as previously described.

Soon Sister Benedicta found herself being asked to return to her philosophical work, and to complete a massive several hundred page manuscript which sought to synthesize the philosophies of Thomas Aquinas and Edmund Husserl. It was at first called *Act and Potency* and then later *Finite and Infinite Being*.⁶⁰ Sister Benedicta tells us that she sensed a major work of this kind was way beyond her professional ability, and yet she dared to attempt it, and in doing so began the arduous work of synthesizing the thought of the two greatest philosophers she had encountered. It was her passion for truth that drove her to consider how these two great thinkers, so different in methodology, could none the less reach so many similar conclusions.

In the following letter we see that the happiness that her earlier study and writing of philosophy brought to her no longer exists. Her work is motivated by obedience rather than by pleasure:

In recent years, it has cost me a great deal to become ever more aware that I lack the necessary equipment to undertake the tremendous intellectual tasks imposed on us by our times, which I am convinced I see very clearly.

Even more painful is the insight that it is too late to make up these deficiencies. I would be very happy not to have to do any more writing. But as long as my superiors are of the opinion that through my knowledge I may be able and obligated to be of use to others, I shall have to accept the fact that the shortcomings, so well known to me, will also become apparent to others.⁶¹

This work was completed by 1936, and the Sister Benedicta was asked to write a book about the

mystical way of St. John of the Cross, a 16th century founder of the Carmelite reform. She decided to present her author as beginning to develop a theology of the person. In this light Sister Benedicta focused on the way that prayer invites a person to pass through a dark night of the senses, of the intellect, and of the will on the road to a perfect union in love with God.

Each night has an active phase, in which the person freely chooses to give up certain things, and a passive phase in which things are taken away from outside. In a letter written in 1940 to a Dominican sister, the goal of St. John of the Cross's mystical way of prayer is stated clearly and simply:

"Pure love" for our holy Father John of the Cross means loving God for his own sake, with a heart that is free from all attachments to anything created: to itself and to other creatures, but also to all consolations and the like which God can grant the soul, to all particular forms of devotion, etc.; with a heart that wants nothing more than that God's will be done, that allows itself to be lead by God without any resistance.⁶²

Sister Benedicta continues by stating both the value and the method of this self-passion, or dying to the self.

Should we strive for perfect love, you ask? Absolutely. For this we were created. [Perfect love] will be our eternal life, and here we have to seek to come as close to it as possible. Jesus became incarnate in order to be our way. What can we do? Try with all our might to be empty: the senses mortified; the memory as free as possible from all images of this world and, through hope, directed toward heaven; the understanding stripped of natural seeking and ruminating, directed to God in the straightforward gaze of faith; the will (as I have already said) surrendered to God in love.

This can be said very simply, but the work of an entire life would not attain the goal were God not to do the most essential. In the meantime we may be confident that he will not fail to give grace if we faithfully do the little we can do.⁶³

In her major text, *The Science of the Cross*, Sister Benedicta elaborates in great detail that last quoted phrase "the little we can do."⁶⁴ Drawing upon her experience of the Ignatian method of spiritual exercises Sister Benedicta describes the battle of prayer as an engaged battle in the active dark night of the senses. "To engage in battle with one's desires or to take up one's Cross means actively to enter into the Dark Night."⁶⁵ So her approach to the passions now moves from a simple recognition, a sympathetic empathy, and an intellectual or objective study, to an engaged interior battle.

Directly quoting St. John of the Cross, she describes how ~~the main~~^{in the active night of the senses} passions of joy, hope, fear, and grief or sorrow may be transformed through active choices to strive to direct our inclination to what is more difficult, more unpleasant, what gives less joy, what makes us disconsolate, what brings us to being unnoticed, and so on. ~~This will help the person to become free of all attachments to things in the world, and more available for God's unifying love.~~^{These actions may help us}

The next phase is the passive night, which the person undergoes and experiences as an interior crucifixion. The person may lose all delight in both things of the world, and in spiritual things. This experience of a "purifying aridity" can lead a person to recognize in themselves many imperfections such as "spiritual pride that delights in its own graces and virtues, despises others and instructs rather than accepts instruction; spiritual avarice [which] can never have enough books, crucifixes, rosaries, etc."⁶⁶ ~~himself, others~~

Sister Benedicta gives much attention to the transformation of sensual joy. Interpreting St. John of the Cross she describes how joy in visible things can lead to vanity, distraction, impurity and envy; joy in listening can lead to distractions, gossiping, and rash judgments; joy in various scents can lead to repugnance towards poor people and dislike of acts of service for

others; joy in delicious dishes may lead to gluttony, wrath, discord and lack of charity to the poor; and joy in touching pleasant things to destroying the strength of the senses.⁶⁷ She concludes that if a person willingly engages in the battle of the active night of the senses, or accepts the suffering of the passive night of the senses, then the person "exchanges sensual for spiritual joy and remains permanently united to God."⁶⁸

It is important to realize that for Sister Benedicta, the goal of ascetical ordering or emptying of the passions was not to become a stoical person with super self control. Rather, everything for her was oriented towards a warm and personal relationship with Jesus Christ in his mysterious union as God-and Man. As a Novice she wrote about how much she loved her two hours a day of meditation according to the Ignatian method which fostered a developing closeness to Jesus through placing oneself imaginatively in his presence during some event during his life on earth. She spoke often of the importance of loving the sacred humanity of Christ, and of coming to love his gift of his passion and death for the salvation of the world. With this spiritual orientation, it is not surprising that Sister Benedicta began to be ever more desirous to grasp the way of Christ through empathy, and then to conform herself to this way as her religious life progressed. With this understanding, her dark night of the senses simply became a way to be more available for the infusion of the life of Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit into her own soul.

In 1939 we find her writing about how this dying to the self relates to her relation with Jesus with respect to the following of her monastic regulations:

Our Holy Rule and Constitutions are for us the expression of Divine Will. To sacrifice personal inclinations for their sake is to participate in the sacrifice of Christ. To conform as well to the unwritten laws, the customs of the house, and the preference of the

| community is demanded by love. If we do all this in order to give the Heart of Jesus joy, it is not a restriction but the highest activity of freedom, a free gift of bridal love.⁶⁹

From as early as 1933, the year Hitler came to power, Sister Benedicta made an offering of her own life to God in deep union with her jewish people, and as a sacrifice for peace. She describes herself as recognizing the cross of Christ which was beginning to fall on the destiny of "God's people" and that since she recognized it, she had to take it upon herself in the name of all.⁷⁰ She also wrote a letter during that same year to Pope Pius XI to ask him to write an encyclical against the persecution of the Jews. So her offerings of sacrifice were practised both for situations of suffering both inside and outside the monastery.

Her life moved dramatically from the active dark night to the passive dark night when historical events moved quickly in Germany. She had to leave the monastery in Cologne suddenly around the end of the year 1938 because the synagogue was burned and Jewish residents were persecuted. She writes in her letters about her transfer to Echt, Holland with her Sister Rosa where it was hoped they would be safe. By March 1939 Sister Benedicta asks her Mother superior if she could make a full interior offering of herself "to the heart of Jesus as a sacrifice of propitiation for true peace, that the dominion of the Antichrist may collapse, if possible, without a new world war, and that a new order may be established?"⁷¹

In 1939, a publisher which had already accepted her major book on Eternal and Finite Being for publication changed his mind because he was afraid to publish something by a person with Jewish heritage. She writes to another sister: "Then it went no further because the publisher lost courage. All efforts have failed. I do not know what more to do, other than to leave the whole thing up to the Lord."⁷² She was frequently trying to help her family members escape

Germany. In one letter she states: "I am very worried about my relatives, Will you please help me...?"⁷³ In many others she reflects on the growing darkness enfolding Europe.

In 1940-41 she had a little reprieve personally while in Holland, and was able to write her work *The Science of the Cross*, and live in a Carmelite community warmly supported by the Sisters and the Bishop. At the completion of this work in December 1941 she writes in a letter the following prophetic words:

|||

I am satisfied with everything. A *scientia crucis* [knowledge of the Cross] can be gained only when one comes to feel the Cross radically. I have been convinced of that from the first moment and have said, from my heart: *Ave, Crux, spes unica!* [Hail, Cross, our only hope!]⁷⁴

Just two weeks previously she had had to register and report for emigration as a non-Aryan German. The departure was able to be delayed, while her community looked for other possibilities in Switzerland, until July 26, 1942 when the Catholic Bishops formally objected to the genocide being practised by the Germans against the Jews by having a pastoral letter read in every parish. In retaliation on July 27 all Catholic Jews were ordered deported. On August 2 the SS arrived at the Carmelite Monastery in Echt and arrested Sister Benedicta and her sister Rosa—and sent by train “to the east.”

On August 7 Sister Benedicta was sighted by the postal worker, Johannes Wieners, who was working in the railroad depot in Breslau. As we mentioned before he noticed the nun appearing at the entrance of the railway car as the door was slid open by a guard. After their initial conversation, Sister Benedicta looked around to see where she was, then she said: "This is my beloved hometown. I will never see it again." She added: "We are riding to our death." Johannes Wieners asked her: "Do your companion prisoners believe that also?" She answered:

"It's better that they do not know it." The account continues with a description of the postal workers arguing among themselves whether or not they should do anything for those in the railway car. When some of them asked her if they could bring them any food or drink, she answered: "No, thank you, we accept nothing."⁷⁵

(Final words)

While there is no evidence for the reasons Sister Benedicta refused their offer, it seems probable that she wanted to protect them from retribution for trying to help the prisoners. In this act of charity through self denial, she freed the postal workers from their difficult situation while thanking them for their kind offer. She was perfectly united with the passion of Christ in his free and innocent offering of his own life for the salvation of others. Because she too was innocent, her passion was His Passion. The records state that she is presumed to have died on August 9, 1942 in Auschwitz. While there is no direct statement to the effect of how she died, it would also be presumed that it was in the gas chamber.

In order not to end our reflections on the passion of Edith Stein in a manner which focuses primarily on death in a gas chamber, I would like to share with you part of a poem-prayer that Sister Benedicta wrote about the chamber in the human soul which holds the secret of new life. Its title is "I shall stay with you..."

The inmost chamber of the human soul
Is favorite dwelling to the Trinity,
His heavenly throne right here on earth.

To free this heav'nly realm from hostile hand,
God's Son descended as the Son of Man.
He gave His blood as ransom.

Within the heart of Jesus pierced with lances,
The realm of heaven and earth become united.
And here we find the spring of life itself.

This is the heart of Trinity divine,
 The center also of all human hearts.
 Source of our life from God.

It draws us close with its mysterious might,
 It keeps us safe within the Father's lap
 And floods us with the Holy Spirit.⁷⁶

1 hr 25 min

60 min

In 1987 Edith Stein (Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) was declared "Blessed" by Pope John Paul II, having deemed to have lived a life of heroic virtue, and now being recognized as a model for men and women. Her passion was active and passive, contrary to reason and in harmony with reason. She lived a passionate life and a passionate death. May we all be able to learn from her.

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Endnotes

1. See, "passion" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1948), Pt. 1-11, Q. 22. My emphasis.
3. Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family (1891-1916)* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1986), 330. My emphasis.
4. Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters (1916-1942)* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1993), 16.
5. Stein, Letter to Mother Petra Brüning, OSU (1933), *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 150.
6. Stein, *Life*, 319.
7. Stein, *Life*, 349.
8. Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D., trans. in Chronology, Edith Stein, *Life*, 434.
9. Stein, *Life*, 353.
10. Stein, *Life*, 352.
11. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 150.
12. Stein, *Life*, 77.
13. Stein, *Life*, 327.
14. Stein, *Life*, 327.
15. Stein, *Life*, 329.
16. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 146.
17. Stein, *Life*, 282.
18. Stein, *Life*, 283.
19. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 22.
20. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 23.

21. Steih, *Life*, 122.
22. Stein, *Life*, 132.
23. Stein, *Life*, 376-7.
24. Stein, *Life*, 269.
25. Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1989), 100-1.
26. Stein, *Empathy*, 101.
27. Stein, *Empathy*, 102.
28. Stein, *Empathy*, 104.
29. Stein, *Empathy*, 104.
30. Stein, *Empathy*, 108.
31. Stein, *Empathy*, 109.
32. Stein, *Empathy*, 84-5.
33. Stein, *Empathy*, 116.
34. Stein, *Life*, 123.
35. Stein, *Life*, 191.
36. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 35. See also 37.
37. See Waltraud Herbstrith, O.C.D, *Edith Stein: A Biography* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1971), chapter 5, especially 64-5.
38. The next two paragraphs are taken from Prudence Allen, "Edith Stein: The Human Person as Male and Female," *Images of the Human*, ed. Hunter Brown et. al (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1995), 400-401.
39. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 99.
40. For a detailed account of this development see, Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution* (Montreal and London: Eden Press, 1985), or second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).
41. For further detail, see Prudence Allen, RSM, "Hildegard of Bingen's Philosophy of Sex Identity," *Thought* LXIV (September 1989): 231-241.

42. See, Edith Stein, "Problems of Women's Education" in *Essays on Women* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987), 164-171.
43. The material from next three pages is taken from a draft of the article Prudence Allen, "Sex and Gender differentiation in Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein," *Communio* 20 (Summer, 1993), 389-414.
44. Stein, "Problems," 177-8. The insertion of [male human] and [female human] enables a more accurate rendering of the passage, for "masculine" and "feminine" are more appropriately considered as types and not as species in Stein's theory.
45. Accidental characteristics, like colour of hair, and so forth, are in the Aristotelian model simply due to matter, and are not considered in the definition of the human being. Edith Stein is making the claim that sex and gender differentiation is not accidental but essential to the respective identities of men and women.
46. Therefore, it is the orientation of the structure that is essentially different in man and woman, not the specific content of the structure itself.
47. References to lived-body soul complex may be found in "Spirituality," 94-5 ; to the faculties in "Ethos of Women's Professions," in *Essays*, 43, "Spirituality," 94-6, 102-3, and 113-7; and to professional work in: "Spirituality," 106, 112-3; "Problems," 148 and 207; "Vocation," 81; "Value," 247-8, 256-7, and "Ethos," 43, 48-9, and especially 42, where she states "first, that certain abiding attitudes are unique to the feminine [female human] soul and form woman's professional life from within out; second, that the very nature of woman draws her to certain professions."
48. Stein, "Church, Woman and Youth," in *Essays* 238. See also "But this nature [of woman] is not uniform but varies according to types and individuals." "Problems," 150.
49. Stein, "Spirituality," 98-9.
50. Stein, "Problems," 173.
51. Stein, "Problems," 179.
52. Stein, "Ethos," 47. Stein also asks: "What does our age demand of women? First of all, it requires most of them to earn their own living." "Principles," 126.
53. Stein, "Ethos," 49. See also "Women's Values," where Stein considers a woman who enters a masculine profession and either "feels forced into conditions of life and work alien to her nature," or if she is strong enough, "she has perhaps succeeded in converting the *masculine* profession into a feminine one." Also, Stein describes women entering and then mastering, by changing the profession, what had previously been "masculine monopolies, 256.
54. Stein, "Woman's Value," 253.

55. Stein, "Spirituality of Christian Women," in *Essays*, 93-94 and 112-113; "Problems," 178-180 and 207; "Woman's Value in National Life," in *Essays*, 148-9 and 251; and *Empathy*. Stein is careful to note that she is not giving an exhaustive list, but rather a selective list of characteristics. She states: "During the last few decades psychology has been much occupied with the psychical differences between the sexes; certainly, experiment and statistics have not revealed much more than what ordinary experience already teaches. I would like to emphasize only two criteria differentiating man from woman from those which are usually mentioned since they have particular significance in helping us understand the intrinsic value of woman.", "Woman's Value," 248.
56. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 114.
57. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 115.
58. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 141.
59. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 186-7.
60. It is not published in English yet, but an over 800 page typescript translation exists in a PhD Dissertation by Augusta Spiegelman Gooch, University of Dallas, 1981.
61. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 189.
62. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 318.
63. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 318-9
64. See, Edith Stein, *The Science of the Cross: A Study of St John of the Cross* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960).
65. Stein, *Cross*, 32.
66. Stein, *Cross*, 34.
67. Stein, *Cross*, 70-71.
68. Stein, *Cross*, 71.
69. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 313.
70. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 295.
71. Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 305.
72. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 314.
73. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 294.

74. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters*, 341.
75. Koeppel, in Stein, *Life*, 434.
76. Edith Stein, *Selected Writings*, (Springfield, Il: Templegate Publishers, 1990), 49.